

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 MCT-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 TRSE-00 OMB-01 IO-13 /083 W
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R 141345Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY SANA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1223
INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
USINT BAGHDAD POUCH

S E C R E T SANA 1825

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PINS, PINT
SUBJECT: FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS RE AL-HAJRI ASSASSINATION AND INTERNAL
SITUATION

BEGIN SUMMARY. FOREIGN MINISTER AL-ASNAJ TOLD ME ON MAY 12
EVIDENCE NOW CLEARLY POINTS TO IRAQI AND PDRY INVOLVEMENT IN
RECENT ASSASSINATION OF QADI AL-AHJRI WITH THE PROBABLE COL-
LUSION OF MUHSIN AL-AYNI. AL-ASNAJ SAID THAT SAUDIS HAVE
BEEN FULLY INFORMED ON SITUATION AND HAVE AGREED TO HOLD
SUMMIT MEETING OF YEMENI/SAUDI COORDINATING COMMITTEE IN
EARLY JUNE TO DISUCSS INTERNAL SITUATION AND TO TAKE STEPS
TO BRING ABOUT RAPPROCHEMENT BETWEEN CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AND
NORTHERN TRIBES. AL-ASNAJ EXPRESSED GRATIFICATION FOR
CURRENT FULL SAUDI SUPPORT OF THE AL-HAMDY REGIME. JUNE
MEETING COULD, THEREFORE, TURN OUT TO BE A SIGNIFICANT
EVENT IN YEMENI/SAUDI RELATIONS, PARTICULARLY IF TRIBAL
PORBLEM CAN BE SETTLED. END SUMMARY.

1. FOLLOWING MAY 12 CALL MADE FOR VISITING WAR COLLEGE
GROUP, FOREIGN MINISTER AL-ASNAJ DETAINED ME FOR A FEW
MINUTES TO INFORM ME THAT BASED ON THE BEST INFORMATION
AVAILABLE THUS FAR THE YARG IS NOW FULLY CONVINCED THAT IRAQ

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AND PDRY WERE BOTH INVOLVED IN THE RECENT ASSASSINATION
OF QADI AL-AHJRI, PROBABLY IN COLLUSION WITH MUHSIN
AL-AYNI. THE ASSASSIN, ZUHAYR AKASH, IS PRESENTLY IN
BAGHDAD AND IS A MEMBER OF THE PFLP. AKASH, HOWEVER, WAS
WORKING WITH ALAQI HUSAYN FARHAN. THE LATTER IS OSTENSIBLY
A YAMDAH (PDRY AIRLINES) OFFICIAL BUT IS IN REALITY THE
HEAD OF THE PDRY "ASSASSINATION SQUAD", RESPONSIBLE FOR

SEVERAL ASSASSINATIONS INCLUDING THE BEIRUT SLAYING OF MUHAMMAD AHMAD NU'MAN THEN YEMENI PRIME MINISTER.

2. AL-ASNAJ CONTINUED THAT IN LIGHT OF THE ABOVE INFORMATION THE YEMENI GOVERNMENT INTENDS IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS TO ASK THE IRAQI GOVERNMENT FORMALLY FOR THE EXTRADITION OF BOTH OF THESE MEN EVEN THOUGH: A) FARHAN MAY NOW BE IN

PDRY, AND B) IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT THE IRAQI GOVERNMENT WILL REPLY. AL-ASNAJ COMMENTED THAT NONETHELESS THE REQUEST FOR EXTRADITION WILL SIGNAL THE IRAQI GOVERNMENT AS WELL AS PDRY THAT THE YARG IS FULLY AWARE OF THEIR COMPLICITY IN THE AL-HAJRI MURDER. THUS, THEY WILL NOT THINK THAT THE YARG IS "STUPID; ABOUT THE INIMICAL INTENTIONS OF EITHER PARTY VIS-A-VIS THE PRESENT REGIME IN SANA.

3. AL-ASNAJ ADDED THAT PDRY APPARENTLY BELIEVED ITS INVOLVEMENT IN THIS MURDER WOULD BE UNDETECTED, GIVEN THE EXPECTED YARG SUSPICION OF SHAIKH AL-AHMAR AND HIS NORTHERN TRIBAL SUPPORTERS. PDRY IS DOUBTLESS HOPING THAT YARG WILL TAKE ACTION AGAINST AL-AHMAR AND THUS PRECIPITATE SERIOUS INTERNAL UNREST WITHIN THE REPUBLIC AS WELL AS PUT STRAINS ON YEMENI/SAUDI RELATIONS. AL-ASNAJ WENT ON TO SAY THAT WHILE THERE IS NO INFORMATION WHICH PRESENTLY DIRECTLY INVOLVES AL-AHMAR OR EVEN SINAN ABU LUHUM IN THE AL-AHJRI ASSASSINATION THERE IS STILL GOOD CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE POINTING TO MUHSIN AL-AYNI, WHO HAS BEEN THE LINK IN THE PAST BETWEEN THE IRAQI AND PDRY-BACKED LEFTISTS HERE AND THE NORTHERN TRIBES.

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4. AL-ASNAJ ALSO SAID THAT THIS INFORMATION HAS BEEN PROVIDED THE SAUDIS, WHO HAVE EXPRESSED GREAT INTEREST IN THE AL-AHJRI CASE AND WHO HAVE BEEN GIVING THEIR FULL SUPPORT TO YARG IN ITS INVESTIGATION.

5. AL-ASNAJ INFORMED ME THAT THIS MATTER AS WELL AS THE CURRENT INTERNAL SITUATION WAS DISCUSSED WITH PRINCES FAHD AND SULTAN DURING PRESIDENT AL-HAMDI'S RECENT ONE-DAY VISIT TO JIDDA. PRINCE SULTAN IN PARTICULAR WAS FULLY BRIEFED BY THE PRESIDENT WHO HAD AN HOUR-LONG PRIVATE SESSION WITH HIM. PRINCE SULTAN URGED AL-HAMDI TO KEEP COOL DESPITE THESE ANTI-REGIME PROVOCATIONS AND AT THE SAME TIME ASSURED AL-HAMDI OF FULL SAUDI SUPPORT.

6. AL-ASNAJ ADDED THAT FOLLOWING THE JIDDA DISCUSSIONS IT HAS NOW BEEN DECIDED THAT A SUMMIT MEETING OF THE JOINT YEMENI/SAUDI COORDINATING COMMITTEE WILL BE HELD IN SAUDI ARABIA SOME TIME IN EARLY JUNE INVOLVING AL-HAMDI

AND KING KHALID AS WELL AS TOP YEMENI AND SAUDI LEADARS.
DURING THIS MEETING ALL MATTERS AFFECTING SAUDI/YEMENI
RELATIONS WILL BE DISCUSSED AND THE SPECIFIC PROBLEM OF
INTERNAL OPPOSITION TO THE REGIME WILL BE "THRASHED OUT."

7. ACCORDING TO AL-ASNAJ, PRINCE SULTAN HAS SUGGESTED THAT
FOLLOWING THIS MEETING AND DURING AL-HAMDI'S SUBSEQUENT
VISIT TO PARIS IN JUNE, AL-AHMAR BE INVITED TO THE KINGDOM
TO TAKE HIM AWAY FROM THE LOCAL SCENE FOR A WHILE AS WELL
AS TO TALK SOME SENT TO HIM. AFTER A FEW MONTHS IN
THE KINGDOM AL-HAMDI HAS IN TURN AGREED TO INVITE AL-AHMAR
BACK TO TAKE ON "AN IMPORTANT POSITION" IN THE YEOGI
GOVERNMENT. AL-ASNAJ CONTINUED BOTH THE YEMENIS AND THE
SAUDIS HOPE THEREBY TO BRING AL-AHMAR BACK INTO THE FOLD
WHILE DENYING THE EXTREMISTS THE CAHNC E TO PLAY ON TRIBAL
UNREST IN THE NORTH AS A WAY OF UNDERMINING THE AL-HAMDI
REGIME. AL-ASNAJ CONCLUDED BY SAYING THE SAUDIS ARE

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GIVING FULL SUPPORT TO THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AT THE PRESENT
TIME AND THAT AL-HAMDI WAS VERY PLEASED WITH HIS RECEPTION
IN JIDDA DURING HIS RECENT VISIT THERE.

8. COMMENT: WE TOO HAVE BEEN RECEIVING VARIOUS REPORTS
POINTING THE FINGER OR PLACING THE BLAME MORE CLEARLY ON
BOTH IRAQ AND PDY FOR THE RECENT ASSASSINATION OF AL-HAJRI.
THE IMPORTANT FACTOR NOW FOR AL-HAMDI AND HIS
GOVERNMENT IS THAT THEY ARE RECEIVING FULL SAUDI SUPPORT
DURING THIS POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS TIME IN THE HISTORY OF THE
REGIME. THE PROJECTED MEETING IN JUNE, THEREFORE, COULD WELL
TURN OUT TO BE A SIGNIFICANT LANDMARK IN YEMENI/SAUDI RELATIONS,
PARTICULARLY IF THE AL-AHMAR PROBLEM CAN BE SETTLED TO THE
SATISFACTION OF ALL CONCERNED. FINALLY, FOR THE LAST SEVERAL
MONTHS THE YEMENIS HAVE BEEN PUSHING THE IDEA OF GETTING
AL-AHMAR TO SAUDI ARABIA AS PART OF A DEAL WITH THE SAUDIS
TO ALLOW THEM FREER ACTION AGAINST NORTHERN TRIBAL
DISSIDENTS. IT WOULD APPEAR THAT THE SAUDIS HAVE NOW AGREED
AND OVER THE COMING MONTHS WE MAY WELL SEE OVERT MOVES
AGAINST THE NORTHERN TRIBAL REGION, PARTICULARLY THE NIHM
AREA OF SINAN ABU LUHUM.

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